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# Guide

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FAITH

and the

COLLEGE STUDENT

SAN FRANCISCO  
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IT SEEMS TO ME

## Catholic World Anniversary

*The Catholic World*, in April, celebrated its hundredth anniversary. It began its second century with a completely new format "to express the way in which the Church is reaching out with loving concern to the modern world . . . admiration for and involvement with — not withdrawal from the world." The entire issue is a journalistic triumph; each article forecasts a glorious future for the Church.

But readers of *The Catholic World* are accustomed to good things each month. It is always distinguished by vitality, relevance and openness. And there's a happy balance between the rightful claims of tradition and an eagerness to know, welcome and incorporate the best insights in the new. After all, change is as much a mark of the Church as is her stability. And every instrument of the Church should be concerned not only to preserve things worth saving, but to be hospitable to the need for growth and progress.

This spirit is in the best tradition of Father Hecker, founder of the Paulists and first editor of *The Catholic World*. He embraced the faith after a painful search. And his appreciation of the perennial rich gifts of Christ only deepened with the years. But he was equally convinced that major changes in the Church were long overdue.

A true prophet, he asked for more emphasis on the inner life of the Church and increased devotion to the Holy Spirit. He advocated Christian freedom and better communication with the world. Adaptation, the role of the laity, and a break with counter-reformation attitudes were the themes of his lectures and writings. Contemplative, apostle — he came to see the spiritual vitality in Protestantism and gave increasing attention to the unity for which Christ prayed. These are the concerns of Vatican II and they receive enlightening treatment in *The Catholic World* each month.

Warm congratulations to editor Father John B. Sheerin, worthy successor of Father Hecker, and to all his staff—particularly associate editors Louis McKernan and Charles Palms.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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# Faith and the College Student

Joseph L. Walsh, C.S.P.

John J. Kirvan, C.S.P.

*Fathers Walsh and Kirvan are chaplains at the Cardinal Newman Foundation at Wayne State University, Detroit. In their daily experience, they recognized "an increased restiveness in our students about their allegiance to the Church." This often amounted to "hostility and frequent resentment" towards the Church.*

*Their findings seemed to be confirmed by other knowledgeable observers. Brother Luke Salm, had remarked that "the new generation of Christians is not at all prepared or willing to accept the doctrines of faith in the way that we or their parents were." Brother Luke spoke of "the rising incidence of apostasy." Then, there was John Mahoney who spoke of the intellectual and religious failure of our gifted college students who sometimes lapse from the faith.*

*In an effort to discover how widespread was this conviction, these Newman chaplains consulted a broad cross-section of competent Catholics and published their findings in their Newman Review, Winter, 1964. It is here reprinted with their generous permission. Limitations of space necessitated some condensation.*

*EUGENE BURKE, C.S.P.,  
Catholic University of America and  
Trinity College.*

I'm not at all sure that we are dealing with apostasy. The reason is, I think, that the inadequate theological formation makes it appear a crisis in faith that looks very much like apostasy. But this is because the motives and the understanding of what the act of faith means for them at this age and this situation simply isn't clear to them. This is my strong feeling.

We have, on the whole, and certainly on the college level, as yet to reach a genuinely effective balance between creating the climate for personal commitment to the fact that God reveals himself in and through the Christian community, and at the same time the theological, and by that I mean more specifically the philosophical resources, that make this both intelligible and related to all the rest that they know.

I suspect there are more students with problems than we can count. In a Catholic college it is very seldom that they are going to tell you that this is the case. But I would

say that particularly in the last five years there are an increasingly articulate percentage that come up and tell you that they are not all sure that they believe what you are teaching, and they are not all sure that they have faith in any true religious sense. Now that would have never occurred, I think, in a normal ordinary Catholic college until about five or six years ago. I think the fact was there, but to express it, to state it bluntly to you, this is quite new in my experience and I think it may be the top of the iceberg.

I really don't know what has changed except that it seems to me that it lies in one of the things that's most important to the so-called "new breed," the sense that it must be relevant or it isn't worth the trouble.

There is the question about faith, but it isn't a turning to unfaith. It's a question of their being open to commitment, but they want to see what the commitment is and they want to make sure that what they are committing themselves to is relevant to the world as they conceive it. It is the old Biblical problem of God, made relevant or made present in our time, in a different set of conditions. But this is it. The problem of God is to confront the modern man, to show that the Christian believers really believe God is acting in history through them. The quality of their life, the quality of their concern, and, if you will, the existential dimensions of their concrete concerns, these are the ways in which the believers face the living God.

DANIEL CALLAHAN,  
Associate Editor,  
*The Commonweal*

My own impression, and I stress "impression" is that lapsing from the Church is becoming more of a problem, but it probably reflects as much a change in the Catholic community as it does in the quality of Faith. The Church is far more self-critical and far more open. It is easier to be critical, to dissent from the community, and probably in a pluralistic situation such as we have in a country like ours, it is far easier to cut oneself off from the Catholic community without a great deal of social pressure which one might have had in an earlier generation.

I would guess that at least in the past there were any number of people who

simply remained Catholic because there didn't seem any option open to them. They were tightly wed to a Catholic cultural community. Now the Catholic cultural community is much less a monolithic reality than it once was and much less a socially narrow community. Problems can be faced more directly, questions can be raised more openly, with the result that we'll probably see more leaving the Church who at one time might simply have avoided the whole problem of whether they actually believed or not, whether they accepted the teachings of the Church.

### 'AFFECTS ALL GROUPS'

I don't know that any one group of Catholics is particularly affected. I would think that possibly the group ranges the whole spectrum from intellectuals to non-intellectuals, from the highly motivated to those with less motivation. It seems to me that the more creative are certainly going to be represented in whatever overall total there might be. At the same time I would suspect that the problems of the highly motivated, the gifted and the sensitive will probably find parallels among the less gifted and the less sensitive. I suspect one is likely to hear more from those who are articulate and hence they may seem proportionately over-represented, but I would suspect that one would find this at all levels of students.

I would stress that what we might have is not so much a crisis of faith *per se*, although Christianity has suddenly seemed to be false or irrelevant or what have you, but rather a kind of readjustment of people to a totally changed social situation. This is what seems to me to be more likely. I think one should probably say here, that there is no doubt that many Catholic college students left the Church in earlier generations, too, but kept this a much quieter thing.

I have often been struck by the number of people who at first seem only to have the usual *aggiornamento* problems, who are interested in seeing certain forms of change and have various complaints about backward areas of Catholic life. But when one talks with them more closely one often finds that their problems are of much deeper concern and would not be necessarily solved if all of the reforms were put into practice.

I particularly felt this in the case of the racial problem. There are a fair number around who, uncertain of the ultimate meaning and value of the Church and perhaps more broadly of Christianity, are tending to stress very much the race issue, almost as if they were looking for a very handy, quick, pragmatic test of the validity of Christianity. On occasions you run across people who say if the Church can't meet this problem they can't remain in the Church. These are the extreme cases, but nevertheless I felt the same spirit among others in the sense that they seem to be looking for some concrete, visible, empirical evidence that can be discussed for value. It's very tempting for them, I suspect, to settle on one or two particular social issues where Christianity can do something and show visible results.

It is not so much that I see people really leaving the Church. I can, however, see this happening in the near future. Right now I don't see any more situations of that than I ever did, but I get the feeling that people are finding the Church more and more of a strain than they once did, despite the Council. I wouldn't be surprised, if in the near future, there was a sudden jump in this respect. I have a sense of much more strain and people thinking more in that direction and thinking of this possibility.

**DONALD J. CASEY, M.M.**  
*Executive Editor, World Campus*

Much of the problems of the so-called wavering faith of the college student lies in those who have presented the faith to the students. Too often our faith has been taught as something apart from reality; something nice to make people good or merely an aggregate of more or less compelling "don'ts."

Feed a student on a diet of that for 12 years and he becomes immune to almost anything. Tell him then that Christ is important for his life and the lives of others and he may nod externally and really half believe what you say. But his whole religious value structure inside will say no. He has learned a Faith that is individualistic—so why should he worry about others. He has heard about a doctrine that says "fear the world"—yet he finds the world attractive, a world he likes and wants to do some-

thing for. He has grown up in a religious atmosphere that sought intellectual consent without a personal commitment to social needs, so he has never really experienced what it means to be a Christian—being involved in every human need.

Free this student from the bonds of parental, grammar or high school care and the last thing he is interested in or wishes to become part of is a "religious" group. But most of the time he is fleeing from a psuedo-religion he has learned, not the true revelation of Christ.

Such a student becomes "indifferent" or "loses his faith" for he never really had it. He has grown up a Christian schizoid—with a human heart that longs to come to God as a human person and involve itself in something worthwhile, and with a negatively oriented morality that offers nothing but stop signs.

Before students are condemned for "irreligiosity" let every theology teacher examine his course and see if he really is teaching the Word of God, not some collection of abstract nonsense syllables; let each Chaplain see if the liturgy he conducts is really a living experience or just the satisfying of a Sunday obligation; let every university administrator see if he has given students enough freedom and encouragement to become actively involved in the moral issues of the day—civil rights; economic privation.

When this is done, college leaders can turn to see what is the matter with the students. And if they have solved their problems, they may find that little else need be done.

The problem of faith as regards students is perhaps not so much their losing their faith, but their finding it in the first place.

**ANDREW GREELEY,**  
*National Center for Opinion Research,  
University of Chicago.*

My reaction is basically this. I really can't find myself agreeing with either statement. My own personal experience as well as data we've been collecting from college students would not lead me to believe that there is this dichotomizing of the population. It seems to me that Brother Luke says that there is going to be a change where you

will have either the committed Christian or the non-Christian.

I think it would be hard to prove this. I have the impression that the historic situation is that you have a curve of people, the upper end of which is dedicated, the lower end of which is out, and the vast majority in between, lukewarm. It seems to me that there is every reason to think that this historical situation is continuing. Indeed I think that those who are concerned probably can resolve their problems more readily today than they could 20 years ago.

The Catholic intellectuals and scholars of 20 years ago by and large left the Church. I don't see so many of them leaving today. It was impossible 20 years ago to be a sociologist at Columbia and to be a Catholic. It is no longer impossible. In fact it is quite easy. Pete Rossi who is my boss summed it up when he said: "It's pretty difficult to leave the Church now because by the time you leave, the Church has changed so much it's outside waiting for you." Now this is a view from somebody who is on the outside.

### *'I'M OPTIMISTIC'*

It may be unduly optimistic but I think that there is a good deal of evidence that the graduate student who has problems now can find people and books, and things in the changing Church that are much more helpful than the graduate student of 20 years ago.

This is not to say that we should be content with the kind of religious training we're giving people in Catholic colleges. I think it is dismally bad, but, it's dismally bad, not because it's driving people out of the Church but simply because for the vast majority of people it is presenting no intellectual or religious challenge. I would much sooner see the problem put in this context than the context of apostasy because our data doesn't show apostasy. It does show a large number of people who are quite dissatisfied with the theology they are getting. It's not challenging to them. It doesn't meet their problems.

I do not know in the graduate department of sociology at the University of Chicago a single apostate Catholic and there aren't any. Maybe a fifth of our students are Catholic. They are all practicing Cath-

olics, some of them are daily communicants. They are almost to a man dissatisfied with the way authority is being used in the Church but they're not about to leave because of this. Now this is one department of one University. I don't want to generalize on that. I would cheerfully generalize from our hard data. My impressions from the people I know around here is that apostasy is nothing like it was 25 years ago.

We have looked at the 10 big graduate departments of the country and we could find no differences in apostasy rates across the board for Protestants, Catholics or Jews. They were the same at all the schools. About 12 to 15 per cent of born-Catholics leave. Most of the apostasy has occurred, however, late in high school.

We have measured them in terms of academic performance, the marks they get, their occupational values, their career plans and the sort of life expectations they have. Apostasy is somewhat more likely amongst the A students to the tune of maybe a percentage point or two, but not overwhelmingly so. There are 87% of those who were born-Catholics and got less than an A still Catholics, and 85% of those who got an A still Catholic. So there is a margin here, but I don't say it's overwhelming. I don't have any prejudices either way but I find it very hard to explain away the data.

I would have expected more apostasy at the secular graduate school than we found. I heard much about people losing their faith at secular universities, and I find they don't.

I wish Brother Salm were right. I wish this really were an era where we could have the hot or the cold and not the luke warm. But the lukewarm have been with us for a long time and it seems to me they are going to continue to be with us.

*JOHN HARDON, S.J.,  
Department of Philosophy,  
Western Michigan University.*

I could not do justice to the depth of spiritual hunger among the students, which is not being satisfied in the present system of university education. Each contact with the under-graduates gives further evidence that they want to learn desperately about man's relations with God.

There are several reasons for this. Most college people had only a smattering of for-

mal religious education before they finished high school. Some had a few years in childhood, which they have come to associate with pre-adolescent immaturity. Those who had a full complement of church-affiliated schooling often feel unprepared to meet the challenges of intellectual criticism that envelopes them like an atmosphere the moment they enter the college precincts.

I would stress the students' desire of knowledge of *why* they believe what they do or why anyone should believe at all. Two kinds of students come to college: those who enter with a definite religious commitment, and the minority who have only the vaguest notion of what commitment means.

Every type in either class, however, is looking for the intellectual integrity which they have not been able to secure (with rare exception) before entering college. This is partly explained by the fact that the mind does not generally mature to a critical peak until the late teens. It should also be accounted for by the relative absence of a philosophical approach to religion in church-affiliated secondary schools.

### **'THE PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY'**

Many Catholics come to a secular school because they believe it will better equip them for the problems and opportunities of a pluralistic society. They choose a secular college because they think the faculty and student contact it offers will give them a balance in dealing with the non-Catholic world, which another four years in a Catholic institution would not afford.

Behind this reasoning stands a century of Catholic higher education that has grown in numbers and equipment, but not always in its adaptation to the times. Both secular and church-related schools can profit from reappraisal. Catholic colleges are beginning to see their duty to prepare graduates for an integrated life among people who are not Catholic and not Christian. Tax supported universities are more slowly admitting their duty to prepare young Americans for religious maturity without sacrificing academic integrity.

**SISTER JACQUELINE,**  
*Vice-President, Webster College,  
Webster Grove, Missouri.*

Many of us are terribly convinced that until we achieve a real involvement with the secular intellectual world, we will be losing our students instead of protecting them. I feel strongly that the only security that we can give them is the security of realizing that they are finite human beings contemplating the infinite.

We dare not make them dependent on platitudes, or fixed positions or closure. We, to be internally consistent, must, above all, make our students contemplatives. I mean, we must teach them to work with life as a series of approximations, to go through turmoil, to realize that the great intellects are essentially contemplative people.

It seems a great irony to me that a good deal of the secular humanist world has more intellectual and spiritual humility than we have let ourselves understand. I am convinced that we must find it, and that the way to discovery is to open ourselves up to the secular world. Hopefully they will then find the same qualities in us.

We must let our students, particularly the bright, probing students see us in our own probing reality, working with as peers the anthropologist who happens to be an agnostic, the physicist who happens to be an atheist, the sociologist who happens to be an Arab. From this should develop in the student what I have often called the security to be insecure, a profound kind of faith.

We who are Christians, we who are self-consciously graced (others, I think, are unconsciously graced) do a great disservice to the supernatural life when we take grace to be a measure of caution rather than a measure of new power. From grace should come a sense of power that would enable us to live in tension, that would allow us to live at times in torment. A President of the United States must live with his finite power, knowing that it is finite. He must be able to face hard decisions and live with them, not only when they are right, but even when they seem wrong. Yet with our students we are so cautious. "Don't get into trouble . . . don't take a chance on your faith . . . don't make a mistake." We raise a pygmy generation and then wonder why they reject us in one of two ways: they

either believe us and get guilt complexes and scared; or they don't believe us and reject what they see as a shallow existence.

How many of the latter there are, I don't know. I'm not a statistician. I'm afraid it is many. I am even more afraid, however, that there are many, many more who have never faced themselves. We have failed to give them a sense of personal responsibility. External crutches are so easily available. Like our own generation, they are being brought up through high-school and college in that awful kind of retreat atmosphere that spends itself in: "how far can I go?" In this thinking, spirituality is a kind of materialistic calibration. "Tell me on the calibrated ruler scale what's a sin and what isn't!" No responsible human being acts this way.

### *'TAKING RISKS?'*

Here and there, however it is different. Some students are getting the open kind of education which will produce responsible human beings. It's being done intensely in a few places by a rising number of people. But it produces fear in others, fear that it might succeed, and fear that it might fail. There seems to be an undefined fear in the Church that some schools which go at it this way might succeed. But what if we should fail! Almighty God gave us free will, you know. He took the greatest gamble. And we try to take that gamble out of our lives, the gamble that we say theologically God destined us for. We try to remove risk from the lives of our students, and it seems to me that in doing so we provide the ultimate risk.

I know persons who tell me that what I am saying they have been saying for years. But there is one difference. I'm still a Catholic and they are not. How, they ask, have I managed to remain "inside." I know others who when they come into contact with vital Catholicism, with faith that is open to the secular world, are torn apart. They are former Catholics, now agnostics, who feel were they to meet a sufficient number of open Catholics they might feel again that there was room, even for them, within the Church.

You run into such people over and over and over again. But before they will talk to you, they will have to find you not only approachable but extraordinarily empathetic.

ic. They have to believe that for you also religion cannot be all cut and dried. They have to see this in you. This means that you have to admit to yourself and then let them see that you too go through periods of terrible darkness and terrible unknowing. But this we haven't shown.

SR. HELEN JAMES JOHN,  
*Dept. of Philosophy,*  
*Trinity College.*

I think that there is actually a new kind of commitment taking shape in the lives of many of the young people now in college. Pope John's *aggiornamento* in the Universal Church, and the brief Kennedy years in the United States, have virtually abolished the ghetto or siege mentality for the newest generation. As a result, the many among them who are really open-eyed and thinking have a new attitude toward the "Faith of their Fathers"—it can no longer be seen as a family heirloom to be cherished and protected from outside attack. Rather, increasingly they see their Faith precisely as personal commitment to the Person of Christ, and to His Body, which is the Church.

A characteristic illustration of this attitude is their combination of outspoken criticism of time-honored institutions and attitudes with an equally outspoken, and practical demand for more profound theological insight and ways to bring these insights into the living of private and public life. (I think here of a meeting last year at which students fiercely objected to "the assumption that we are all committed Catholics"—and then proceeded to petition for establishment of new elective courses in theology; turned out a reading list full of Danielou, Schillebeeckx and Rahner; and did some earnest soul-searching about the motives of their own participation in community service projects).

It seems impossible right now to foresee just what will come of the visions now being seen by the young people of our New Pentecost. But one safe generalization might be they are facing what Rahner has termed the "diaspora" situation, in which each man's Faith must be the expression of a lucid and intensely personal response. Here naive dogmatism and thoughtless conformity cannot fail to be recognized as utterly inadequate, and the strong demands of authentic Faith will be seen in total—some-

times frightening—dimensions. Under these circumstances, it may be expected that deficiencies from routine practice will increase numerically. But the young people who freely and lucidly respond to the Christian calling in these days seem to me to bring to the Church the promise of a life of faith "lovelier, more dangerous," than that of any age since the first days of Christianity.

FR. JAMES KAVANAUGH,  
*Syndicated Columnist.*

Charles Davis, in his admirable essay in *Theology in the University*, stresses the point that a relevant theology must find the center of its own culture and operate within that framework. It must, at the same time, be ecumenical in perspective, existential, and genuinely involve the laity. Operating in this atmosphere and moving out from its creative center at the heart of contemporary culture, theology will be involved with the real questions of the day. Not having done this in the past, and even fearing it in the present, the University Theology program lacked relevance not only for the student, but for the professor as well. Many priests, "trained" in a kind of theological IBM machine, found, as I did, that the heart of their own commitment was largely volitional, or a mere reflection of loyalty to the "family traditions" or the "alma mater."

The student of theology was not taught to listen to the secular mind, nor even prepared to understand his terminology or metaphysic, but rather would drag him into his own backyard of Aristotelian anthropology, psychology, and physics, sprinkle him with scriptural texts, and pray for his conversion. All the battles had to be fought in the "backyard," only rowdies stood on the streetcorners. Revelation became, not the consciousness of Christ interpreted in modern dimension of stereo and color, but the same, listless, black-and-white presentation of irrelevant truths—with only the anecdotes altered from decade to decade.

Consequently, students of theology were excellent at answering questions. Only later did they discover that no one was asking those questions any more. In addition, these students, priests or layman, were the world's worst listeners. Man was still body and soul, will and intellect, passions and internal

senses, conscience and wounded nature. When the man we spoke of appeared as a Martian, the theology that dealt with him was "outer orbit." Good theology has always involved a collision of a revealed truth with a discovery of a quite alien discipline. We just haven't had any collisions until recently, because we were on a different road.

It took a smoking Europe, a seething Asia, and a cynical America to realize that 19th century theology was irrelevant. If our theology gets out of the background of the *Oath Against Modernism*, and deals with authority, personal responsibility, and dignity, a real treatment of the nature of revelation and doctrinal development, a universal vision of collegiality, and overcomes its insistence that quiet conformity is better than open and living conflict, then we won't have students throwing over a theological development with a sympathetic sigh: "I didn't know that materialists were so nice."

Irrelevance is our chief failure. Irrelevance was produced by a lack of openness. Our packaged theologians were not a match for an honest mind that was building trails, not just memorizing their direction. If the Good Shepherd is looking for sheep, He's got plenty of them. What I think He needs are lions—produced by *Honest To God* theology.

FR. ROBERT E. KAVANAUGH,  
*Director of Newman Apostolate,  
Michigan State University.*

I am convinced that today most young people with above average minds face a crisis in their late teens or early twenties. This crisis is perhaps best described as "a period of almost loss of faith." The crisis takes many forms and shapes, and its duration and accompanying agony vary greatly from one student to another. And those who fail in the crisis could better be described to have lost their courage than to have lost their faith. During the crisis, disbelief and agnosticism are seen as tempting realities, no longer explained away by pat answers or memorized cliches.

It is only fair to point out that some students seem to blissfully pass from unformed to transformed Christians serenely and with hardly a struggle. But in those many who face the crisis, it seems dubious that any form of meaningful Christian education is possible before the crisis begins.

If the crisis is not met, the usual result is a "Christian" distinguished from his neighbors only by the fact that he burns the light in his backyard shrine every first Saturday of the month.

The crisis arises most often in the area of questions which youthful education did not handle, and the mind begins to vacillate doubtfully, mistaking valid questions for sinful doubts. Intelligent and facile-tongued peers, provocative professors, readings which disdainfully bypass the Christian view and the natural stimuli of youthful intellectual awakening, form the usual occasions for the crisis in this area.

The crisis also fomented in the midst of turbulent moral problems which give rise to a need to doubt those laws and dogmas which make me so frustrated and so incapable of self-respect. The melancholic agony and despair of the male student incapable of perseverance in his frustrating effort to overcome masturbation, the growth in love with one whose moral standards differ, the curiosity about pre-marital sex experience, the fears of the gnawing tendencies of homosexuality, the social pressure of fraternity-sorority type groups, the birth control dilemma for married students, and the natural period of boredom and indifference which often accompanies the late teens and early twenties—these are additional areas in which the crisis arises. It begins morally but gradually undermines the self-assurance of the believer. Doubt is the only way to lift the agonizing pressure of self-hatred that accompanies those who begin to be involved in these moral problems. But it does the chaplain no good to say: "Go to confession and these problems will pass."

Though the problems of intellectual crisis are inter-twined with moral turbulence, the questions are real to the student. And the questions must be dealt with while the moral turbulence is handled in kindly counseling or in confessional privacy.

**JAMES McGLYNN, S.J.**  
*Dean of Graduate School,  
University of Detroit.*

Today's generation of intelligent young Catholics seems to be challenged in a way in which the previous generation was not. Many mature and deeply committed Catholic graduates of both Catholic and non-Catholic colleges now in their thirties and

forties were able to grow from their childhood faith into a personal commitment without going through a crisis of faith. I suppose that this generation was able to accept the Church as an institution and then deepen their faith, whereas for many of today's bright young Catholics it seems that the deepening of faith must come first.

To meet this new situation we will have to reorient our whole presentation of the Church to these young people. Very early we will have to try to elicit a personal commitment from them. We must, therefore, insist first on Christ and our union with Him and only then on the Church as an institution. We must present the Church through Christ rather than Christ through the Church. Recent Popes and the hierarchy seem to have sensed this spirit, for the liturgical renewal so happily under way, has this inspiration and orientation. It will behoove all of us who are engaged in the religious education and direction of our youth to do all in our power to implement the liturgical renewal. It will be an invaluable aid to us in our apostolate with tomorrow's Catholic leaders.

**JOHN McGUINNESS,**  
*Graduate Student,  
Wayne State University.*

What Salm says about the "rising incidence of apostasy" at the Catholic colleges is certainly true. There is no gainsaying it. My own everyday observation continually affirms that Salm's statement is an incontrovertible fact. What I find regrettable is that there still are some who would deny or minimize the proportions which this fact has now assumed. Such people, though acting in good faith, are greatly, greatly mistaken and actually hinder those who wish to be of positive help in understanding and remedying this widespread problem.

Mahoney likewise acknowledges the reality, and extent, of this situation but adduces reasons for these lapses from faith with which I, in part, disagree. Mahoney contends that the Catholic college fails to provide a worthwhile theological framework for the excellent student and the student in return is repelled by theology's "'advanced' presentation." The overall lack of proper emphasis, of proper perspective in the teaching of theology (as such) convinces the student of the inapplicability of theology in

his life. With all this, I fully agree. Yet I do not think that, as Mahoney seems to say, this is the cause of a student's lapse from faith. I would view it as a consequence. I hope to make this clearer in what follows:

My own formal theological education has been haplessly, standard fare. Apologetics and Scripture bitterly attacked those of non-Catholic persuasions; Sacramental Theology saw me baptizing fetuses in unending succession; and "Christology" (sic) was where I learned to spell homooousion. Yet this drivel never discouraged my faith for I recognized it to be what it was: sheer drivel, sheer nonsense. Today, however, I am of the numbers who can not fully and freely claim to be a believing Catholic. Why?

**'EMOTIONAL AND  
INTELLECTUAL  
FACTORS ARE  
INVOLVED'**

The answer to this remains partly knowable, partly elusive. The reasons are understandable when they have to do with personal problems: "identity crisis," fear of risks, unwitting antagonists at home, and the like. These things tell us that the problem is largely affective; the intellectual aspect is not the fundamental cause of doubt. But I would disagree with Fr. Gouch who would make disbelief "ultimately reducible" to psychological causes. For there remains an elusive, cryptic theological element which, however slight, no amount of personal emotional health can overcome. It is this combination of emotional and theological factors which, I think, brings down the house about one's ears.

And so, being now "out," it's true that I can criticize the prevailing theology for its irrelevancy as I can criticize the sacramental life of the Church for its ritual without content, or Church members as "followers" without witness. But this did not bring about the loss of faith. The awareness of these evils did not cause, but was simply made more acute by, the loss of faith.

It is for this reason that I do not feel that improving theology courses will change the situation greatly. In fact, the number of unsettled faiths was far greater in the courses taught by the two young, *trained*

theologians than was the case elsewhere. So even though improvement of theology curricula is essential, the mainstream of this problem runs deeper and is not to be so simply coped with. A contemporary theological approach will make apparent to the excellent student the shortcomings and misconceptions of his adolescent faith just that much sooner. And the average, insensitive student will simply learn a new idiom in place of the old. The former will become disillusioned, the latter will remain apathetic.

My attitude must look defeatist, but it's not meant to be. The immediate re-vamping of theology courses is imperative: I don't deny it. I wish only to point out that, for the present time at least, providing an intellectually richer and more satisfying framework to the gifted student is no solution to a problem which is not exclusively intellectual. A richer theology is a necessary step, but only a first one.

*MICHAEL NOVAK,  
Philosopher and Novelist.  
Author of The New Generation.*

I agree very strongly with both statements, with John Mahoney, for example when he says "Catholic education fails the good mind." I disagree very strongly with Fr. Greeley's article on "The New Breed" because he seems to take the view that there is no problem of faith, there's no danger of loss of faith in this new breed. It is a question of honesty, integrity and so on. They are going to be even better Catholics. It's just style.

I would say from my experience that this would have to be qualified. If the Church moves quickly enough towards honesty and integrity there won't be any trouble for the young people. But, on the other hand, many of them are very suspicious about dishonesty and the lack of authenticity which they find in the Church from the very highest levels, from the Pope, through the Curia, the Bishops, down to local priests, their parents, Catholics everywhere. They associate too much of this dishonesty, this fleeing from hard questions with the Church. As a consequence I think there is a great danger that a lot of them will leave the Church.

It has been my experience from conver-

sations that many of these people were ready to leave the Church when the Council began. The fact that the Council gave much promise, gave them hope. But this is a kind of tentative hope, because they were a little bit suspicious about how much could be done anyway. And so many compromises are being struck. The Council is not updating the Church at all. It is bringing it up to the year 1850 or so. It is not really touching the heart of the problem for many of these people. This is especially true, I would say, among those who are most idealistic, most energetic and most ambitious. They are the ones most deeply hurt by the present institutional state of affairs.

### *'TREATED AS REBELLIOUS'*

The point is, that if anyone raises hard questions about such matters he or she is often treated as rebellious, or playing with faith or something like that and told to pray. "Go to Church. Above all pray." Hope to overcome the difficulty this way, instead of sitting down with someone and talking about what the faith has to say on this issue, what the profound matter really is instead of just the superficial apologetic which doesn't satisfy anybody. As a result young Catholics often take the Church as most young Communists take the Communist party. They are aware that there's a party line, and most people don't go any deeper than that. And when they begin to see through the party line they just don't want to have anything more to do with it.

Now they are sometimes aware of deeper and better things going on. Then they are tempted to try to make a go of it in the Church. They then just fight all the time between the outward face of the Church and a few of those genuinely hopeful signs of a deep and penetrating faith.

I want to stress the idea that this problem is taking the place of the clerical-lay problem. I don't see much evidence of anti-clericalism anymore. It's much more a conflict between authentic and superficial faith on both sides.

I think the level of apostasy is very high. I think it's extremely high. I don't have figures on it. I would say, however, that the figures would be misleading unless you had a way of testing the most creative

people, the most ambitious people. I would say the percentage is extremely high among these. It's by far the best who are leaving. But maybe that's not quite true, maybe of course a lot of the others leave quietly. But what the others seem to do is to leave in spirit. They keep going to Church. They don't want to cause trouble in the family. And their usual unconscientious ways allow them to keep going to Church even if they don't believe it. They have a minimum to do with the Church.

But among the brighter, more conscientious, I find a lot of them leaving. They just can't keep up a front. This, of course, is not universally true. There are many young people who are very good and have the good fortune of being near to someone who can show them the deeper parts of the faith. And then they live as kind of rebels within the Church and they settle for a sort of prophetic way of life. They define themselves this way and it works out. But in New York or in Washington it's appalling to see the ex-Catholics who are editors and junior executives. Professional circles are just filled with these people.

The real crisis in American Catholicism is not a crisis between *aggiornamento* and backwardness, it is a crisis of belief and unbelief, and the *aggiornamento* is only a coverup. I mean this in the sense which I was speaking before. The *aggiornamento* is giving people hope who otherwise wouldn't have hope. But this is only a cover. Their real issue is whether this preposterous Church be divine.

### *PHILIP SCHARPER*

*Editor, Sheed and Ward*

My own experience with college students and recent graduates leads me to agree with observations of Brother Luke Salm, F.S.C. It is most important for all of us of older generations to examine the possible causes of what I would take to be the growing disaffection of the young toward the Church. While a number of causes could be cited. I would choose to concentrate on two:

1. Recent graduates of Catholic colleges have inherited a bitter harvest: omissions and false emphasis of ourselves and our fathers before us. Where we had been schooled in a polemical (and hence, truncated) theology, they have grasped that

their task is not to carry on a Christian debate with the modern world, but to live as Christians within it. As we are all aware, teachers of theology in Catholic colleges have, for over a decade, been discussing whether or not theology should be taught as a science or as "an art" — whether, in short, Catholicism should be presented to the young adult as leading to a corpus of knowledge or as leading to a personal commitment. The fact that the very question should flare into prominence only within recent memory indicates that the Catholic academic community had moved dangerously far from a central realization that Christ, in word and deed, stands at the very center of the Christian consciousness, that within Catholicism we encounter a Person and not a string of propositions, or a series of precepts.

Given our contemporary climate which places so much emphasis on the person and his response to reality, it is not surprising that it is our "better" students who, in so many instances, seem to find that they have asked for bread and we of an older generation have offered them stones.

### *'GROWING SECULARIZATION'*

2. We must also recognize, I think, that the growing secularization (not to be confused with secularism) of western culture has also played a role in the seeming disaffection of the young to the Church. Religion and culture are no longer, as they once were, complementary and inter-penetrating forces. The decline of membership in our so-called spiritual societies is paralleled by the declining membership in our so-called patriotic societies. The Legion and the Holy Name Society suffer attrition together, and for the same reason: people no longer feel the need to establish their

identity through membership in a group pledged to certain aims, no matter how noble and praiseworthy. One can be patriotic without having to signal it by membership in a patriotic organization; one can be religiously committed without having to signal his inner decision by membership in a "religious" organization.

Indeed, to the extent that our younger adults have absorbed the ethos of their own generation, one will find them less and less inclined to recognize or even respect "belonging to" as an acceptable, let alone the inevitable, banner of indicating one's inner tropism of soul.

To the degree, therefore, that the Church appears as institutional, and hence effectively screens the presence within it of the dynamic and charismatic, to that degree the better endowed and better trained of our younger generation may find it almost a point of honor to hand back their tickets.

### *'GROWING DISAFFECTION'*

The fact of the growing disaffection for the Church of young Catholics (and I take this to be a fact on the testimony of those better informed than I) means that we of another generation must not spread what little time we have flailing at the fact, but must be occupied in asking the right questions: how have we failed them, and what can we do — if we are permitted to do anything — which might atone in some way for our sins of omission and commission? Perhaps, as it has been the integrity of the young which has forced us to recognize the existence of the question, it might also be that through imitating their honesty, we might be led to viable solutions, which must necessarily include, at least in part, a repudiation of much that we have thought and said and done.

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SACRAMENTS: *The Gestures of Christ.*

Edited by Denis O'Callaghan  
*Sheed and Ward.* \$4.00

These papers were originally written for the Maynooth Union Summer School, held in 1963. These annual meetings have won wide and favorable attention for their concern to summarize new developments in theology, with emphasis on their pastoral implications. The present volume—with perhaps the exception of the paper on The Sacraments and Our Lady—measures up very well to the high standards of previous volumes.

The contributors have gathered the best insights of modern theologians like Schillebeeckx and Rahner and, within the limitations of brief essays, impart the core of their teachings. Priests, catechists and the general reader who lack the time for investigating the source books, will find here a satisfactory introduction to contemporary understanding of the sacraments.

The liturgical changes already effected by the Vatican Council, and those that are to come, can scarcely be appreciated by those who have failed to keep abreast of the huge development in sacramental theology. Each sacrament is a meeting with Christ. The Church is the Sacrament of Christ. God's word is a call to conversion, to faith, and then to sacramental participation in the Mystery of Christ. These truisms, at the heart of liturgical renewal, will be almost meaningless until our people are re-educated to their reality. These papers will go a long way towards that required understanding.

While most of the papers are of high excellence, the chapter on "Acts of Christ: Signs of Faith" by Father Cornelius Ernst, is particularly well done. This paper could profitably be read first, by a thoughtful reader; the others might then be seen in clearer focus.

I CHOOSE ALL: *St Therese of Lisieux and Her Spiritual Doctrine*  
Sister Teresa Margaret, D.C.  
*Newman.* \$4.75.

The personality and message of the Little Flower are as relevant today as they ever were. So it is helpful to find both the saint and her doctrine on spiritual childhood interpreted in the light of Carmelite traditions, especially as proclaimed by John of the Cross. (In addition to the many good things in the book is an excellent interpretation of the latter saint for our day.)

St. Therese has sometimes been presented as one who was unduly introspective, too individualistic, and lacking in the true spirit of contemplation. The author—while not primarily concerned to answer this interpretation—gives us a truer picture than has sometimes been offered. There emerges a portrait of one increasingly conscious of the reality of Christ's Mystical Body and her opportunities for interior growth and apostolic responsibilities.

Genuine contemplative and authentic mystic, Saint Therese loved God and His presence with profound attachment. Her total childlike surrender was born of her love of the scriptures. Loving God led her to love his kingdom and its growth in souls and through the world. All those who are at pains to integrate their interior prayer life with the apostolate can learn much from her. No fewer than five popes have recommended her as a safe guide.

Christian Renewal in  
a Changing World  
Bernard Haring, C.S.S.R.  
*Desclee.* \$6.75

There is little debate regarding the unique place Father Haring occupies in the great renewal of Moral Theology. Claudel once remarked, "Certainly we love Jesus

Christ but nothing in the world will make us love moral theology." More than any other single scholar, Father Haring has succeeded in helping countless people to see the Christian moral life in new and more balanced perspective.

His original choice was to serve on the missions in non-Christian lands. But after preparing himself for this apostolate, he was assigned to teach moral theology. A period as Army chaplain, and later as prisoner, gave him invaluable experience into the spiritual ills of Europe and of the necessity of a thorough-going reform in the Church. A later career of teaching, writing and lecturing led to his becoming one of the most influential figures at Vatican II.

The peak of his accomplishments was his three-volume text *Law of Christ*, widely used in seminaries throughout the world. Its very completeness, however, makes it rather formidable and intimidating for the average reader. Responding to numerous requests, the author has summarized the best of his insights into the one volume here reviewed. It is admirably translated by his sister, a nun.

In manageable compass, the writer treats of Christian morality in the light of scripture, dogma and the liturgy. Personalist, centered in Christ, he treats the principles and their application to the main problems of everyday life. Morality as part of Christ's "good news", the primacy of charity, and the new law of the Spirit is displayed on every page. This book belongs on the shelf of every literate Catholic.

Cardinal Newman's Best  
Plain Sermons  
Edited by Vincent Ferrer Blehl  
*Herder and Herder*

Cardinal Newman's farsightedness was such that some have referred to Vatican II as Newman's Council. If your library has a complete set of his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* you have the best and fullest expression of his spiritual teaching. If among your books is the generous selection of these Anglican sermons, approved by Newman, and gathered by his friend and former curate at St. Mary's, William Copeland, you are fortunate indeed. It is curious that while it is possible to obtain the complete set

of eight volumes translated into German you would not be able to procure them in a new edition in Newman's native tongue!

Newman in his Anglican days, who knew the scriptures almost by heart and who was steeped in the Fathers, preached the Christian spiritual life with matchless eloquence and unique psychological penetration. Because of this it is a delight to welcome this discriminating selection of thirteen of these priceless sermons. Readers who taste his "Waiting for Christ" or "The Hidden Presence of Christ" may whet their appetite for much more of his preaching.

Newman's immediate purpose was to raise the level of the Christian life among those who actually heard him. But he allowed the publication of his sermons for other significant reasons. It is interesting to consider these purposes in the light of our current concern for all those outside the Church.

J.T.M.

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## GUIDE

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# Guide Lights

## ECUMENISM AND THE NON-BELIEVER . . .

In a recent issue of *The National Catholic Reporter*, Father Bernard Cooke, S.J., wrote about the problem of the non-believers for the ecumenical movement.

We all recognize whom he has in mind, —that segment of every parish whose faith is nominal and whose apathy is the despair and concern of their pastors. This group poses a problem to the ecumenical movement just as they pose a problem for any other vital activity within the Church, and for the same reason, viz., a fundamental lack of faith. Their adherence to the Church is not a conscious response to a call from God, but a continuing act of homage to the human need for religion. Confronted with the challenge of ecumenism, “. . . they do not have firm enough possession of any religious position to be in sympathy with a person who holds in depth a religious faith formulated differently from their own.” They miss the point of ecumenical concern and so the movement evokes no sympathy. Moreover, it may even appear as a threat.

## FAITH AND UNDERSTANDING . . .

Quite correctly, the ecumenists stress the need for understanding in leading the body of the Church to ecumenism. But it is a case of understanding that must be based on faith and a faith that is genuine, however shot through it may be by misunderstanding. It is the pre-existing faith of the Christian which seeks understanding. *Credo ut intellegam*. The trouble with the non-believing Christian is that there is no real ‘credo’ and hence little possibility of ‘intellegam.’ Or, if his understanding is perchance developed, the last state of that man is worse than the first,—his unbelief may become an intellectually rounded indifference.

What this points up, pastorally, is the close relation between ecumenical progress and conversion—real interior conversion to Christ. Men must be converted to Christ before they can be made one in Him. Ecumenism is possible only in situations where there are real believers. This means that the Church’s ecumenical task is inseparable from her missionary endeavor. If Christian unity is to be advanced then the faith of Christians must be deepened. The divisions

among Christians are traceable to human factors; their very persistence and acceptance may be tied to some distorted human need. Only a living Christian faith can overcome this kind of barrier and make the ecumenical vision a reality.

Examining another phenomenon, that of the *committed* unbeliever, Father Cooke wonders whether the gradual separation of Christian life and doctrine has not contributed to his growth. In other words, the division between the believing Christian and the avowed atheist may be a reflection of a division that has taken place within Christianity. If this is so, then the way to close the breach and enter into dialogue with the atheist, as Pope Paul has urged, may lie along the path of closer union between Christian faith and practice within the Church. In a world that is growing more and more unity conscious, the Church of Christ must demonstrate her achievements in unity if her message is to be heard. Father Cooke thinks that “. . . until we have learned to put together cult and law, life and doctrine, we will not be able to achieve union among ourselves or to give any adequate explanation to the intelligent non-believer . . .”

## THE TRADITIONALIST APPROACH IN CATECHESIS . . .

The catechists have come to the same conclusion for other reasons. It is right here that we run up against one of the best arguments for the traditionalist approach in catechetics, viz., the fact that ‘it works.’ The doctrinal-apologetic method seems to be effective with large numbers of people and has been for years. Some have noted that where a real attempt is made to present a catechesis that is scripturally and liturgically oriented, there is sometimes a disappointing dropout and fewer baptisms. Assuming this is the case (although this is by no means certain), what Father Cooke has brought up suggests that our innate pragmatism perhaps fails us in this case. The test of what ‘works’ as the mark of success in the field of instructing persons in the faith has been too uncritically accepted. Certainly, the traditionalist method of instruction brings large numbers of persons into the Church, but does it *convert* them?

Every priest knows there is considerable fall-away among converts to the Church. No one knows how great this drop out is. Every priest has lately become aware, also, that some of the strongest opponents of the new liturgy and other movements within the Church are converts. He may also have observed that one of the things about the Catholic Church that consistently attracts some inquirers is the very certainty of her faith and the unchanging character of her law. This attraction may be the response of a genuine human need for truth and loyalty, but we know that it can sometimes express something much less healthy. There is a type of person who is attracted by these features of the Church because he needs practical absolutes in order to support himself in judgment and action. This type of inquirer thinks he sees this in the Church. What he doesn't see very often is the rest of the picture—the Church as a community of worship and witness. He responds to law and draws a blank at cult. In the past, where cult and law were often actually separated in the life of the Church, this played right into this inquirer's weaknesses. The Church attracted people who were not integrated persons—people whose moral responses were separated from their worship responses. This may have passed unnoticed for a long time, and these converts made some kind of adequate adjustment to Catholic life, but now that the Church has begun to integrate her cult and law in the liturgical movement and the Vatican Council, these people feel very uncomfortable in their faith. Their presence and needs in the Church today force us back once again to a re-evaluation of the traditionalist catechesis.

### LITURGY AND PERSONALITY . . .

This is not meant as an indictment of such persons. Heavens knows it was as much the Church's fault as theirs, and possibly no one could help it. Now, however, when the Church herself has begun the process of integration, it is not a very strong argument in favor of old ways to point to the reservations and objections of new Catholics. Rather, we ought to look a little more deeply into the kind of faith their objections reflect and see if it does not call for just the kind of liturgical and scriptural formation the Council enjoins. Dietrich von Hildebrand wrote a book once called *Liturgy and Personality* in which he examined the role of liturgy in the formation of the human person. The kind of Catholic just described is precisely the one who is most in need of the kind of formation in living Christianity

that only the liturgy can provide. He may be repelled by this approach but it is no service to him to feed his exaggerated need for law by dishing up a distorted version of Christianity. People may come to the Church looking for law in order to make their own personal world manageable. They may be repelled by Christian cult. Too often in the past we played into their weakness by stressing those areas of the Church which they found so appealing. We were really more anxious to make a convert than to form a Christian.

### ALL OF CHRISTIANITY IS A UNITY . . .

This has been a painful lesson for all concerned and it would be folly not to apply it. Integrated Christians require an integrated catechesis. In some ways, we are at pains to stress the internal unity of Christianity. For example, we are quick to point out to inquirers that they cannot pick and choose among the articles of the Creed. All of it is true and must be accepted or none of it is. Yet, in other ways, e.g., the dimension of Christian living and the social gospel, we are less insistent, and quite willing to settle for an 'I believe' that is limited to the contents of the profession of faith and the ten commandments.

### QUALITY NOT QUANTITY . . .

One of the characteristics of opposition to change in the Church is an aversion to involvement with the rest of the world. Yet, the preaching of involvement is perhaps the best way to wed doctrine and life. This is a weak point in our present catechesis. Instruction in doctrine is topheavy; scriptural content is on the increase; liturgy is being set up on the launching pad; but the dimension of Christian witness in catechesis (except for the personal character and conviction of the instructor) is deplorably weak. There is a great need for more lay catechist participation in the catechumenate, more discussion between these dedicated Catholics and the inquirer to help relate the truths learned in class to daily life.

The standards by which we judge our catechesis should pay more attention to the elements of Christianity than to 'results.' In the long run, the only way to judge the results of our catechesis, if we are to take it out of the norm of pure quantity, is by Christ himself. True, it may make our task more difficult and the results less impressive in numbers, but if it really goes to the heart of the matter, if it really produces a few believers, isn't it worth it?

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.P.



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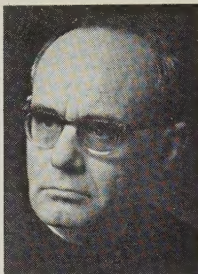
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